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# The RELATIONSHIP " of NATIONS

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## THE RELATIONSHIP OF NATIONS

In choosing the subject of "The Relationship of Nations" to discuss at a Congress of National Service, I have rashly grappled with one of the most gigantic of present-day problems. How does national service, how does patriotism, affect our relationship with other nations? Very badly indeed, ruinously, some internationalists would say. Not necessarily badly at all, but rather helpfully, I should like to prove.

### WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

Any speech on the relationship of nations might at the present time be summed up by two statements: That the relationship of nations to-day appears at first sight to be as hopelessly bad as it can be; and that we are fighting this war to make it better. Looking out on the world at present we see calamity and chaos. Through these latter centuries the nations, growing strong and rich and conscious of their national individuality, have viewed each other with suspicion and hostility. Each has armed itself, has seized strongholds, colonies, new territory, to increase its power, not wholly from motives of conquest, but largely from "an instinct of national self-preservation in a world of international anarchy." In the

world of the past, no power existed to preserve a nation from robbery and enslavement, save its own sword. In such a world it was easy to delude the German people into the belief that Russia was about to leap upon them from the East; it was easy to pour them out by millions, at a moment's notice, to defend the Fatherland against the Slavic hordes. What was there to protect them save their own right arms?

That such fears and suspicions in the world of the past were indeed justified was proved all too well by the assassination of Belgium, suddenly, ruthlessly, in defiance of all the protection which we had ever imagined to exist from treaties, international law, public opinion or mere human mercy. No physical power strong enough to defend her was at hand, and so she fell.

In those fearful days when the War began, we saw the abrupt breaking of all the bonds which were supposed to cut across national lines, not only international law and treaties, but less formal international compacts—of friendship, of common religion, of science and scholarship, of socialism and class interests. The call of national preservation was stronger than anything else in the world. Looking upon the fearful catastrophe which ensued, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that in bitter discouragement some men

have condemned nationalism utterly, condemned even patriotism itself as responsible for our woes.

**NEW BONDS  
BETWEEN NATIONS**

Bad though international relations may appear at the present time, there are really, however, cheering elements to be discerned through the gloom. Closer analysis shows the beginning of a new conception of the relationship of nations, of new bonds of responsibility linking one people to another. We are coming to realize that the peace and welfare of us all depend on the peace and welfare of each one. The feeling of duty toward other nations has been developing slowly ever since that first awful moment of the war when Belgium did not hesitate, did not shirk her fearful share of this duty, but "stood up in the sight of God and man and laid down her life for her friends." Admiration for her has drawn closer the bonds between nations, as has also that wonderful admiration for glorious and invincible France, which Professor Bergson beautifully described to his countrymen by telling them he had found that Americans felt toward France as Frenchmen felt toward Joan of Arc.

**THE NEW PART OF  
INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

For securing justice for these and for the other nations America has gradually learned to

feel responsible. What a change has come over us since the first days of the war, when our country stood aloof, sympathizing with the woes of the world, but conscious of no direct responsibility for playing the policeman and going in to help stop them. Now millions of our citizens are consciously offering their lives that all the nations of the world may enjoy peace based upon international justice. This is a new and heartening phenomenon in the relationship of nations.

We are learning, too, to hate secret treaties and all the outworn diplomacy of the professional diplomats, with their schemes for international deals and conquests. We are longing for simple, frank, honest adjustments of the problems of peoples, as straightforward and fair as would be one honorable gentleman's dealings with another.

In the great league of which we are now one it is striking to see how the nations are gradually learning to subordinate their independent desires, to help each other, to share their resources. So close has become the bond between them, so small the world, that they are even pooling their food supply and sharing it, as might a shipwrecked boatload of mariners upon a desert island. There are protests and grumbling, there is much creaking of the machinery, but surely a



great step in the development of international relationship has been taken when millions of Americans deliberately eat less bread in order that the workmen of England and France may be fed.

**GERMS OF A  
BETTER ORDER**

Building on these existing germs of a better order, we must develop a more rational and happy relationship of nations. Our own country is not ill fitted to lead the way in this movement. We have not as a people, I think, any desire to conquer or to dominate other peoples. Our past history, it is true, is by no means free from stain. We have at times been led by evil counselors; we have stumbled and strayed. But occasionally we have really tried, in a groping way, to treat other nations as fairly and decently as one gentleman would treat another. The exceptional quality of these acts was proved by the skepticism with which Europe greeted our expression of intentions toward Cuba, and the touching gratitude and admiration felt by China when, finding that she had paid us more money in the Boxer Indemnity Fund than was really due us, we returned the excess to her, as any ordinarily honest individual would of course have done. The international makeup of our body of citizens may also help us to point the way. As Mr. Wells made his American say—several years ago—in that great book, “Mr.

Britling Sees It Through": "America is the New World, where there are no races and nations any more; she is the Melting Pot, from which we will cast the better state."

**THE MACHINERY OF  
INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

The better system of international relations

which we hope to see develop out of this war cannot be obtained, however, by mere hoping. We must work out some definite machinery to preserve international peace and justice. I have no sympathy with the extremists who preach the abolition of nations. Apart from emotional and patriotic considerations, which are of immeasurably great importance, as a practical expedient we need the national organizations to build on, we need the nations as the citizens of our new world state. These citizen nations must of course be leagued together in some alliance, of which we have the beginning, let us hope, in the great league now fighting for justice against the Hun. And they must have an international tribunal, which they trust, with some system of international police to enforce its decisions.

**"THIS NEW  
WORLD ORDER"**

I cannot conceive this new world order without a police force. You cannot persuade a nation to disarm—surely not after Belgium's experience—unless there is something to protect it

against a possible brigand foe. The analogy seems to me close between our international anarchy of the past and the situation in a frontier community before any government is organized. Each man is responsible for the protection of his own life and property. He must carry weapons and use them, unless the murderers and the robbers are to rule. Private vengeance prevails. And then, wearying of this state of anarchy, a group of private citizens, without legal warrant or regularity, but for the good of the community, form a vigilance committee and execute informal justice on those who break the peace. And finally courts are established, a police force is organized, and the private citizen can go unarmed.

The world is now at the vigilance committee stage. I first appreciated this a little over a year ago, when I happened to ask a visiting Englishman what the British thought of the plan of the League to Enforce Peace. "You can't expect us to be much interested just now in your vague plans for the indefinite future," said he. "We're too busy grappling with the present emergency. *We're* a league to enforce peace, now, and we're trying to enforce it. Come in and help us!" And soon after that, seeing it in the same light, I am happy to say, we came.

**AN INTERNATIONAL  
VIGILANCE COMMITTEE**

After our international vigilance committee has enforced peace in this present crisis, the peace conference—a radically different one, we all hope, from any previous peace conference—must not adjourn without the establishment of some ordered system of international government, backed by power enough to give authority to its decrees. The process may well resemble, in a larger and looser way, that by which the thirteen colonies, having formed a vigilance committee and won their freedom, organized as a federation which became these United States of to-day. Compromises and concessions among the thirteen were necessary to allay suspicions and antagonisms and induce them to come in. Most assuredly compromises and concessions will be even more necessary to induce the nations to enter even upon a far looser alliance. The plan advanced by the League to Enforce Peace, requiring merely that a nation submit its quarrel to the consideration of an international tribunal before going to war, but not binding it in all cases to refrain from war in the end, is about as much as the nations could be expected to accept at first. Some such entering wedge must begin the growth of an international federation.

Unless a league something like this results at our peace conference, we shall merely drop back into armed hostility and interna-



tional anarchy. The war will have been fought in vain. But the formation of any such league of nations is likely to be bitterly opposed in various quarters. In this country it will be opposed on the one hand by some honest but unpractical international idealists, who will object to the sanctioning of any use of force. They will insist that nations shall be left to do right just because they ought to. They will not be interested in explaining how a nation, any more than a man, can be persuaded to throw away its revolver when it believes there are brigands lurking on the outskirts of its ranch, and no policeman within a thousand miles. They will not appreciate that we must sanction the use of force to protect the law-abiding nation and take away fear.

An international league will be opposed in this country also by many honest but narrow-minded patriots. They will be unwilling to have our nation give up one iota of its liberty of action in the future, unwilling to risk the submission of such vital matters as the Monroe Doctrine, for instance, to any international tribunal. Yet unless some concessions are made, some sacrifice of freedom of action, an orderly government of the world is impossible. When men stopped private duelling, they had to leave the settlement of their dearest personal affairs to the judgments of the law.

**THE HOPE OF  
THE WORLD**

The possibility of such a world federation as we have dreamed of depends on the education of public opinion. The classes of whom I have spoken and others must be convinced of the wisdom of the plan. On the type of patriotism instilled in the people depends the future relationship of nations. The wrong sort of patriotism may wreck any plans for international law and order. In the right sort of patriotism lies the hope of the world.

Americans must be taught to love their country, its past, its ideals, the efforts it has made to offer opportunities for self-development, liberty and happiness to all its citizens. They must be taught that their lives belong, if need be, to the state. They must be taught that the greatness of a nation does not lie in conquest, but in the welfare and ideals of its own people and in its helpfulness in international affairs. They must not learn hatred toward any nation. They must wish to see each people develop its own individuality freely, so long as it does not injure the welfare of the world. They must be fired with patriotic pride at the thought of their country leading the way in a great movement for international peace and justice. Desiring to be helpful and friendly toward all other peoples, they must yet learn not to tolerate cruelty and injustice, but when necessary, to smite and to restrain

the wrongdoer among nations, that the innocent may not suffer. Especially must they learn now that the international order and justice toward which we aspire will not be possible unless Germany be beaten in this war, and thus shown that international brigandage does not pay. In brief, people must learn, through campaigns of patriotic education, that peace is indeed very precious, but that the right is more precious than peace.

**EDUCATION OF  
PUBLIC OPINION**

Those of us who belong to the teaching profession have an important obligation in this movement. As the children of the country are taught in schools and colleges to-day, so will the minds of the citizens of to-morrow be inclined. It is especially our duty to scrutinize the history text books used in our schools and make sure that they are conveying no hatreds, no bitterness, no rancor, but a sane, truthful and helpful conception of our attitude toward other nations. Impressions acquired from school books in our youth stay by us in later years. Our country is reaping to-day, in the antagonism found here and there among us toward our British allies, the fruit of the expression of bitter feeling toward England contained in some text books of American history.

A Canadian friend of mine told me that in his youth the histories used in the Canadian schools conveyed the same prejudice against

the Yankees. He remembered that he and the other small Canadian boys in their games were fond of representing some battle of long ago between Canadians and Americans, in which the Canadians had been victorious, and that it was difficult to find any little Canadians who would degrade themselves by playing the part of Americans.

Another example of the influence of text books on children's attitude toward other nations, and one of a different sort, I found a good many years ago in a history of France for French school children. I have never forgotten the ending of that little book. The very last words, printed in italics, were to this effect: "And so it is the duty of every French child to remember always, above all other things, that we must never forget Alsace and Lorraine, who have not forgotten us." Think of the tremendous effect upon the mind and spirit of France created by the reiteration of these words in the ears of generation after generation of school children. No wonder that after an interval of over forty years the heart of France was still set upon the redemption of the lost provinces.

In this case there was a wrong to be righted, and one must sympathize with the lesson taught by the little text book. But in our own relations with the British Empire our family quarrels were settled long ago, and nothing but harm can result from nurturing in the minds of our children use-



less bitterness and suspicion from the long dead past. The teaching of the pupils in our schools is a most powerful weapon in the cause of patriotism, to be used with the greatest wisdom and discretion, that the new generation may learn the right kind of love for their own country and the right conception of the relationship of nations. Let us teach them not to hate, not to wish to harm or dominate other peoples, but to love their own land and to help her play her part as a good citizen of the world, ready, with head and hand, to make justice prevail.

**THE BETTER DAY**

Dark though the present moment may seem, it is, as I have said, by no means devoid of promise of a happier relationship of nations. There are to-day germs that may well develop, if we do not lose hope, into a fairer order. We must not falter; we must drive on. We must fight; and we must also teach. And the better day will dawn.

To quote Mr. Wells once more: "War is a curtain of dense black fabric across all the hopes and kindliness of mankind. Yet always it has let through some gleams of light, and now—I am not dreaming—it grows threadbare, and here and there and at a thousand points the light is breaking through."



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